PRACTICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Volume 5 May-June Number 3

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CONTENTS

ARTICLES
The Relationship of Social Structure to the Problem of Evangelism in Latin America ..... Eugene A. Nida 101
A Reserve from Within ..... A. Vilakazi 124

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ..... 138

CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURES
The Missionary and Cultural Diffusion - I ..... W.D.R. 139

BOOK REVIEWS
Linguistics Across Cultures, by Robert Lado .....
..... Reviewed by William A. Smalley 147
Christianity and African Culture .....
..... Reviewed by Loren Nussbaum 148

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## Learn That Word!

Most of the readers of Practical Anthropology are not anthropologists. Many have not even had a basic course in anthropology. It is not surprising, then, that they may be puzzled by terminology from that field. Often dictionaries do not provide definitions for technical terms.

In the past we have made some attempt to edit out unnecessary technical terms, but we have not been fully consistent in this, and the residue of very useful, important terms which are rather necessary for an understanding of man and culture is still a problem to many readers.

With this issue we are beginning an attempt to increase the value of Practical Anthropology by providing brief definitions of some of the useful anthropological terms which occur in the issue. This is not an attempt to define all of the difficult words, but to highlight a few which we hope readers will learn to recognize and understand as they are brought to their attention. We hope that anthropologically informed readers will accept these definitions with a measure of tolerance. We would be glad for any improvements you can make on them.

# THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE TO THE PROBLEMS OF EVANGELISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Eugene A. Nida

For many years those concerned with the problems of evangelism in Latin America have been keenly aware of some of the significant correlations between differences of social structure and the response of the people to the gospel. For one thing, relatively few people from the upper classes and not too many from the middle class ever become associated with evangelical churches. This has meant that the membership of most of the Protestant churches has come from the upper brackets of the lower class. The leadership within the churches has seemed to come primarily from the families of independent tradesmen and merchants, e.g. carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and shopkeepers. It would appear as though the gospel had an attraction for just those groups which had much to gain, e.g. education for their children, a sense of importance (as co-laborers with God in the Kingdom of Heaven), and recompense for having been so largely excluded from the upper brackets of Latin American society. Conversely, these same people had very little to lose by becoming Protestants, for they were not so likely to lose their jobs, were not dependent upon some one person for their social and economic security (as in the case of the day laborer or peon), and had never been cultivated to any great extent by the Roman church, which has concentrated most of its attention upon the elite classes.

The phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement among the people of Latin America has also served to highlight the relationship of social classes to the communication of the gospel, for not only is the Pentecostal movement as large as all the other denominations put together, but it has had success not only among the lower classes, from which its membership is largely drawn, but also among some of the upper classes.

Furthermore, missionaries have been quick to note that it is ever so much easier to begin work in new towns or recently built communities than in areas where people have lived for a

long time. All of these facts have served to focus our attention upon the possibilities of understanding more adequately some of the fundamental problems of social structure in Latin America and their bearing upon the task of evangelism.

## Acute Problems in Evangelism

On almost every hand the average missionary faces certain acute problems in evangelism, and a number of these seem to be directly related to factors in social structure. For example, not infrequently there are churches which have flourished and grown for a period of five to ten years, only to be followed by twenty years of almost complete stagnation. Such churches seem to have reached a particular group within a community, and then to have stopped growing. In some instances, a few persons are won to the gospel in the initial attempts to start a new church, but their very presence within the church seems to prevent the entrance of others. In other churches the social standing of the members rises rapidly through improved education, greater ambition, and the indirect results of a higher sense of responsibility--characteristics which lead to greater financial rewards. However, the tendency is for such churches to lose touch with the very classes from which most of the members originally came.

A particularly difficult problem exists in Protestant churches in which there is a class cleavage within the church. In one church in Cuba there is a morning congregation composed primarily of upper middle class young people, many of whom have a university education. The evening congregation consists of older people from the lower middle class and upper lower class. The rivalry between such groups in all phases of the church life is pathetic, for it hampers the potential ministry of such a group and serves to rob the people of a true sense of fellowship.

The differences of response between people in small rural communities and those in the cities has always called for certain adaptations in missionary approach, but the basic problems become increasingly more acute as churches in the urban centers assume responsibility for work in rural areas. So of-

ten they fail completely to establish a really vital work in which the rural people feel anything more than a kind of "poor country cousin" relationship to the city congregation. This distinction of class levels becomes even more difficult in a divided society, that is to say, one made up of a Spanish and Indian constituency. The Indians are usually left out, not because of any desire on the part of the Spanish-speaking people to thrust them aside, but simply because they do not understand the means by which they may effectively develop and promote a vigorous Indian constituency.

## The Role of Schools

In the early years of Protestant missionary work in Latin America the establishment of schools, both primary and secondary, was supposed to be a major factor in overcoming certain of the major difficulties inherent in the social structure of Latin America as it was related to the development of the Evangelical church. These schools were not only supposed to educate the children of Evangelicals, but were calculated to create among the non-Evangelicals a favorable attitude toward the Evangelical cause. Some schools have largely fulfilled this purpose, but a number have singularly failed. By an essentially secular viewpoint these schools have educated certain people away from the Evangelical community, and have often failed to bring into the Evangelical group those from the outside who might have special talents or abilities. The so-called neutralist view of many so-called Evangelical schools is well illustrated by the recent boast of a principal of one of the largest mission schools of Latin America, who insisted that during the last eleven years of the school's existence not one student had been converted.

In view of the numerous problems posed by various factors in the social structure of Latin society, we cannot help but ask ourselves such questions as, What is the basic class structure of these societies? What explains the acceptance of the gospel by one group and not by others? What are the forces and techniques of social change? How do people change their class status within Latin American society? What bearing has the proclamation of the gospel on such changes? What should be our basic strategy in approaching Latin society?

## The Structure of Latin American Society

The structure of society in Latin America is highly complex and differs considerably from area to area. However, despite the possibility of a certain amount of error resulting from oversimplification, we can describe certain essential characteristics of Latin American society by means of a type of inverted diamond diagram:[1]

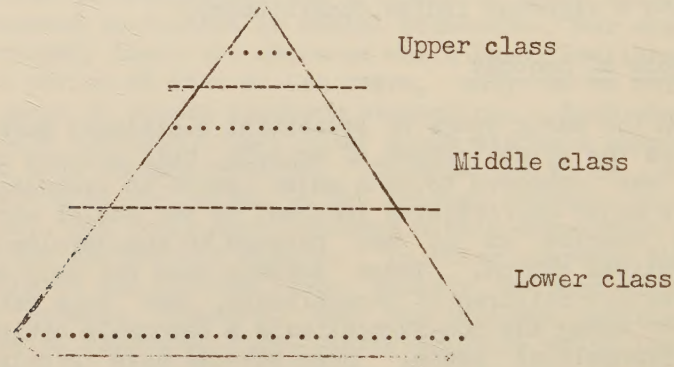



Figure A

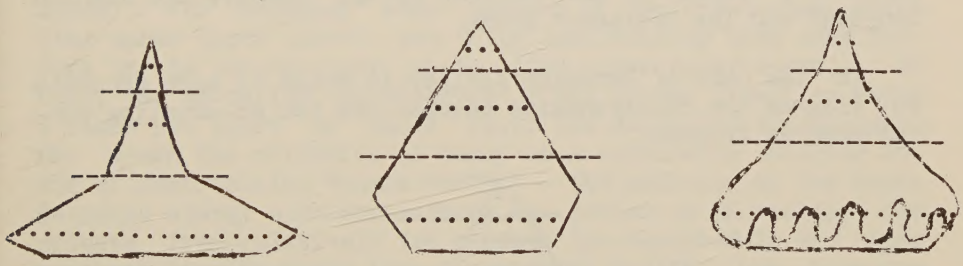
Figure A symbolizes what are probably the major characteristics of most societies in Latin America, in which the narrow point represents the elite, the central portion the middle class, and the base portion the lower class. The upper class is divisible generally into two classes of elite: (1) the old families, representing the traditional aristocracy, and (2) the nouveaux riches, who have only recently acquired wealth and prestige. Some very rich people in the lower upper class may be accepted into the upper upper class, if they have some special influence or political power, but in general the two layers of elite are rather well defined.

The middle class is similarly divided between (1) the upper middle class, consisting of successful but not so wealthy professionals such as doctors, lawyers, professors, politi-

cians, engineers, and businessmen, and (2) the lower middle class, consisting of the white-collared workers, e.g. clerks, bookkeepers, small businessmen, schoolteachers, and preachers.

The lower class is divided between (1) the upper lower class, made up of less prosperous tradesmen, factory workers, independent small farmers, domestic workers, and day laborers, and (2) the lower lower class, consisting of the extremely poor seasonal workers, indigent share-croppers, and the habitually unemployed.

We must not assume that diagram A reflects accurately the actual proportion of the respective population, for the relative size of the various classes differs greatly in the various countries. We do not have the necessary statistics in order to produce a thoroughly accurate picture of the various societies, but we can approximate something of the diversity in types in the following diagrams, designed to portray Haitian, Cuban, and Peruvian societies:



I Haitian Society II Cuban Society III Peruvian Society

Figure B

There are several significant features of the diagrams in figure B. Diagram I has a definite constriction between the class one elite and the class two elite, a distinction which is fully recognized by the Haitians themselves and a boundary which is as difficult to pass over as any in the social structure. The Haitian middle class is also quite restricted, and the lower class is largest at the lowest level.

In Cuban society the middle class is not only relatively large, but the transition from the lower class and into the upper class is not so pronounced as in the case of Haiti. Moreover, the number of people who are indigent is not as great as in Haiti, hence the narrower base.

In the case of Peruvian society the middle class is proportionately less than in Cuban society, with a gradual transition from the upper lower class, but the society bulges in the lower portions of the upper lower class. In diagram III, however, there is an additional feature, namely, the wavy solid line which marks the division between the predominantly Indian population (classified roughly on the basis of habitual use of an Indian language and the wearing of Indian type clothing) and the Spanish-speaking people. It should be noted that the Indian population is the lowest in the social structure, as far as general prestige is concerned, but some members of this class reach up into the upper lower class. However, if they are to go up very far, they must adopt the classificatory symbols of the dominant group, namely, the Spanish language and the "Western" dress.

In the case of Peruvian society it would be more accurate to diagram the relationships between the two co-existing subcultures as follows:

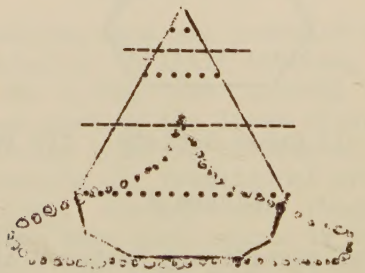


Figure C

In this structure an individual may possess a double status. For example, he may be in the elite within the Indian society, but only in the upper lower class or lower middle class

of the non-Indian society. However, it would be a serious mistake to assume that the social role of Indians within the Indian community can be determined by any general classification of the Indian within the composite national structure.

This same principle of the multiple classification may apply to any subculture or dependent social group. For example, in a small rural area the local "elite" may only rate as upper middle class in the society of the nearby town and as lower middle class in the still more inclusive structure of the nation.

## Bases of Class Structure

From our description of the constituencies of the respective classes one could presume that wealth would be the primary criterion of class membership. There is no denying the importance of money, but it is certainly not the only factor, nor even the principal one, at least not for certain divisions. For example, some members of the first-class elite (the upper upper class) are often less wealthy than many persons in the second-class elite (the lower upper class). In fact, the so-called "aristocracy" often prides itself on being a class set apart by blood (i.e. the so-called blue-bloods) who spurn the criterion of money as a culturally inferior basis of ascertaining "human worth." The position of the Roman Catholic clergy also contradicts the criterion of wealth, for priests from relatively low classes are accepted in the upper brackets despite their lack of personal wealth, but they are usually never admitted into the highest class, unless a papal appointment to the hierarchy overrides local class lines (something which rarely happens). Persons with exceptional talents, e.g. artists, singers, and dancers, or those with gifted intellects, e.g. writers, professors, and orators, may be admitted to a class which for the most part consists of considerably more wealthy members.

Class membership is thus not simply a matter of wealth nor of family lineage, nor of special talents. It includes all of these plus political influence, leadership ability, and the favor of influential friends.

In speaking about such classes we tend to give the impression that they are perfectly obvious to everyone, including the members of the society in question. However, these class distinctions are not fully evident, for people do not wear labels. Nevertheless, people are quite conscious of the class to which they belong (something which is much less true in the life of the United States, where the classes are less well defined and where people are supposed to deny the existence of classes and most people insist that they belong to the middle class). The classes in Latin America can, however, be delineated without too much trouble by determining those groups which (1) participate together in social functions, (2) tend to intermarry, and (3) recognize their essential identity of outlook and mutual interests. Furthermore, each class is aware that those "above" have greater prestige and those "below" have less. Accordingly, all classes, except the top, want to climb up in the scale of prestige.

What we have described as the different social classes are essentially prestige classes. There is no inherent reason why certain groups should be granted more prestige than others (other societies in the world have quite different prestige systems), but the Latin American societies do possess their typical structure, and with this we must reckon.

In describing classes as lower and higher, we only have reference to the built-in prestige factor. Certainly such terms as "higher" and "lower" must not be interpreted as representing any moral evaluation (though that is what many members of the upper classes would like to have others think). If we were to judge the social classes on the basis of such criteria as honesty, reliability, sense of responsibility to family, hospitality, and willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the community, it is quite likely that the upper lower class and the lower middle class would come out on top, with some notable examples of these virtues in the other classes, but not as predominant features. Accordingly, our isolation of classes and their scaling from high to low is based essentially on one principle, namely, the degree of prestige which the members of a society associate with the respective classes.

In speaking of prestige as a determinant of classes we recognize that the pattern is not one of absolute grades and fixed boundaries. That is to say, the classes of Latin American society are not castes, as in India. Rather, they are somewhat fluid groupings of people who associate together in various ways and who recognize in some measure the equality of their status. Prestige, therefore, is a polar element easily recognizable in the extremes, but less obvious in the central zones. Moreover, within the six classes, which constitute the major divisions recognizable in Latin life, there are numerous minor scales of prestige.

Orientation of Classes

The orientation of most members of all but the highest class is upward. That is to say, most people want to have more prestige. A number of people in the lowest classes have seemed to be largely resigned to their prestige status, but within the last few years the development of leftist labor movements in Latin America has resulted in a widespread concern for upward drive among the lowest class.

Most members of the highest class are relatively content with their lot. Their only concern seems to be the preservation of the status quo. Hence, they are skeptical of any radical changes and unwilling to make room for many competitors in the highest class. In fact, any major assault on their class of top elite by the "newly rich" is usually resisted vigorously with all the snobbing of which this snob-conscious class is capable.

The pressures for change of class status are strongest in the rising elements of the middle class, but liberal political ideas have also induced major segments of the lower class to believe that what they would like, namely, more prestige and a greater share in the material rewards, are not only desirable but attainable, and if not by their own efforts then by means of political revolution. The creative minority within the proletariate is thoroughly convinced of this fact and hence is ready to rally the masses behind almost any leader who will promise them a higher status and more things.

On the other hand, while this upward-reaching group in the lower classes is intent on changing the status quo for them and their supporters by any and all means, the top classes are intent on preserving the social structure and the rewards which it provides. In most countries the intensity of the conflict is directly proportionate to the degree of separation and the strength of the intervening barriers.

## Techniques of Mobility

Though we often speak as though political events were the dominant factors in the change of class membership, this is essentially a false assumption. A change of political parties may slightly modify the rules by which persons may change social status, e.g. giving preference to those of liberal or conservative orientation, as the case may be, but for the most part it takes a thoroughgoing revolution to break open the social structure. Even the Mexican revolution, the most drastic in Latin American history, did not completely overturn the social structure. What it did accomplish was to remove some of the first-class elite and to remove the caste restrictions on the lowest classes. It ultimately had a profound effect upon Mexican society, in that it released social pressures bent on upward mobility, but it was far from being a Communist-style revolution in which the higher classes are liquidated or reduced to lower-class status, and the revolutionary leadership take over the places of the elite and erect a high wall of isolation between the party leadership and all the rest of the classes. What is more, the Communist social structure functions so as to draw its leadership, not from the immediately inferior middle class of professionals, but from exceptional persons in the lower class, who are not likely to favor competition from the potentially "dangerous" professionals.

For a woman, the surest means of raising one's status is to marry into a family with higher social rank, for the husband's social position is largely the determining factor in a wife's status. If a man marries "above himself," he may or may not make the grade. This will depend upon personal charm, money, and, in the case of the first-class elite, primarily the determination of his father-in-law to give him social status.

In many segments of Latin society the parents' obtaining for their children a compadre "godfather" or comadre "godmother" of a higher status than themselves is a means of going up in social rank. This is only a kind of indirect benefit, but it does serve to enhance the prestige and tie the social unit together.

Obtaining a padrino is an even more important method of advancing in social standing. A padrino is a person who agrees to help someone in business, often guarantees loans, protects him against abuse by other elite, seeks opportunities for the advancement of his "client," and introduces him to a higher social group than the person enjoys at the time. In return the "client" always supports the padrino's political ambitions, will carry out any favors he is asked to do, and if the padrino should ever have need, the "client" is supposed to help to the limits of his resources. This is, of course, a carry-over from feudal times, but it is a very important contemporary feature of Latin American life, and though it exists on a strictly informal basis (that is to say, there are no legal contracts binding the two parties), the social institution lies at the very heart of Latin life.

A number of other techniques in upward mobility have already been mentioned in other connections, namely, the acquisition of wealth, distinction in artistic performance, brilliance of intellectual endowments, and unusual leadership ability.

## Orientation of the Roman Catholic Church Toward Latin American Society

In view of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is a strictly authoritarian institution with a completely pyramidal structure (after all, the Roman church and Latin society both arose from the hierarchical structure of Roman society), it is not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church has concentrated its attention on the cultivation of the elite. Not only are all the benefits of the church open to such people, but the church obtains practically all its leadership (from bishops on up) from the elite and in turn provides the elite with the

best possible education in the Roman Catholic tradition. Whether the masses remain illiterate or not is not the primary concern of the church. What does count is the identification of interests and viewpoints with the ruling minority.

On the other hand, the Protestants have directed their appeal to the masses, not only because they were the most numerous, but because they were the most concerned with change and responded to the hope of a better chance.

The Protestant appeal to the masses has seemed to many Roman Catholics as being nothing but a veiled form of Communism, for Communist agents likewise appeal to the lower classes and hold out promises of a better life. Any further comparison between Protestantism and Communism immediately shows the profound differences, but there is enough superficial similarity to convince the less-informed or the already prejudiced that they must "repudiate the Communist and Protestant propaganda," as Roman Catholic publicists have repeatedly declared.

## Justification of the Protestant Approach

Some persons have questioned whether Protestant missionaries did right in appealing primarily to the lower classes. Certain individuals have contended that a concentrated "attack" on the leadership of Latin America would have ultimately resulted in greater gains. However, it is extremely doubtful that this would have been the case, even if the personnel capable of such an appeal to the upper classes had been available. All that we can judge from the results of Protestant work in the light of the structure of Latin society seems to confirm the view that early missionaries acted in accordance with sound sociological principles, even though at the time they did not analyze the problems nor define the goals in these terms.

The sociological principles which seem to amply justify the course of Protestant missions in Latin America are three:

1. The future always rests with the masses. This is particularly true in contemporary society in which the vestiges

of feudalism are rapidly crumbling in the assault of the so-called "mass man."

2. The creative minority (to use Toynbee's phrase) which is reshaping Latin life has its origin primarily in the upper lower class and the lower middle class, the very groups to which Protestantism has directed its approach.

3. The only way to raise the masses is to become identified with them. The Biblical principle of the leaven in the lump is the only means of altering in any substantial way the condition of the masses. Even if the elite were won to Protestantism, there would be no guarantee that these persons, whose social position depends upon preserving the status quo, would feel any constraint to change the condition of the lower classes, except in some superficial manner of urging a change of ecclesiastical loyalty on the part of the lower class "subjects."

## Theological Justification

Despite what seems to be an evident sociological justification for our Protestant strategy, we also need to ask ourselves as to whether there has been a corresponding theological basis, or has our historic approach been essentially opportunistic? The answer to this question seems to be quite clear. We do have a theological justification, for in fundamental essence this approach to the masses reflects the divine principle underlying the incarnation, namely, (1) humbling of oneself in order to identify, and (2) giving leadership to others by participation and the challenge to "follow me."

## The Face-to-Face and the Urban Societies

Though the general principle of appeal to the masses is fully justified, it is quite evident that in working out the implications of this principle there are wide differences of practice and response between small face-to-face communities and large urban agglomerations. What works in an urban situation often fails miserably in a small town, and conversely what appeals to rural people falls on deaf ears when directed

to an urban audience. What, then, are the basic differences in the social structures and the most effective means of communicating to these diverse constituencies?

A face-to-face society is just what it implies, namely, one in which all the members are known to each other, and everybody knows all about everyone else. What is more, in such a group most people are related, either through blood or marriage, and if not in this way, then through the godparents and padrino systems. Such a face-to-face society functions in many ways like an extended family and as such tends to (1) make collective decisions, (2) have considerable inner cohesion, (3) present a unified front against intrusion, (4) be conservative in orientation, and (5) be centralized in its control, in the pattern of the family.

If, in approaching one of these face-to-face communities, it is possible to win over the leadership, one can soon gain access to the entire group. That is to say, the community follows the lead of the "ruling" family or group of elders, even as members of a family tend to follow the direction of the father, or other strong personality. On the other hand, if one succeeds only in isolating some of the disgruntled members of such a community and in making them the "leaders" of the newly formed Protestant church, it is very likely that one will never be able to penetrate very deeply into the community structure. Such a "church" will always be a kind of appendage to the social structure, isolated from its essential life and a haven only for the community outcasts.

Many missionaries have felt that the best approach to a face-to-face society is to preach the good news to the entire group and to challenge the community to accept the gospel as a group. This procedure does not overlook the necessity of individuals making personal commitments, but it proceeds on the basis that a group which is accustomed to making group decisions should be confronted as a social unit. Some German missionaries have been singularly successful in this approach in some of the face-to-face communities in Indonesia. Dr. Alcibiades Iglesias, who has carried on a remarkable work among his own San Blas people in Panama, has adopted a somewhat sim-

ilar approach. He has not isolated the Christians nor himself from the community, but has related the message of the gospel to the entire life of the community. A very similar approach has been employed by the Baptists of the eastern part of Cuba, who have sought to minister to all the needs of an entire community and to make the gospel relevant to all without attempting to isolate or estrange individuals within the community life.

On the other hand, it must be recognized that in Latin America the likelihood of an entire community accepting the gospel as a unit is not very great. This means that any Evangelical church will be made up of people who are more likely than not to be a minority in a community. As a minority they will be subjected to all kinds of severe social pressures, depending largely upon (1) the extent to which the church group is composed of those who are already regarded as community outcasts (hence the importance of not formally organizing a church until it contains at least some of the responsible members of the community, who are not subject to the same patterns of rejection), and (2) the degree of pressure which the Roman Catholic clergy can arouse concerning this "intrusion" into the community life.

## Compensation for Social Pressures

When social pressures are brought against a newly established Evangelical church, there must be some types of compensation or the entire church structure is likely to collapse. These people need to experience a kind of fellowship which is even more satisfying than what they have known in the community as a whole. If people can be taught the meaning of their new fellowship in Christ Jesus and what the "new community of the saints" can and should mean, they can be brought into a type of fellowship which will be not only satisfying but creative. The difficulty is, however, that too often this out-group feeling within the Protestant communion is largely defensive, rather than creative; and though it does protect the members, it is largely ineffective in reaching out for others.

One of the very important ways of compensating for the loss of a feeling of social security within the immediate face-to-face community is to relate the small Protestant community to a larger fellowship of other believers in the country. This is done by attendance at rallies, conventions, and official meetings of various church associations, so that they may realize that they are a part of a large, growing body of believers. In Peru one missionary discovered that it was of immense importance to have such meetings in towns which had newly established churches. If the small, struggling church could be the host to a relatively large group of people, who by their dress and behavior exhibited obviously higher social status than was regularly attributed to such Protestant groups, the impact upon the community would be of great importance in the evangelistic efforts of the church in question.

The approach to the urban community is by no means as restricted as that involving the face-to-face society. The urban community is made up largely of people who are dislocated from their former face-to-face communities. They are more independent, more easily attracted into new movements, and more anxious to find means of personal profit and advancement. In the largely impersonal atmosphere of the city, where one fights with one's neighbors but does not know them, the Protestant church has a very special ministry, for it can help to create an effective, mutually beneficial social group in the midst of the impersonal environment and thus meet peoples' basic need for fellowship. This aspect of personal fellowship in the midst of an impersonal society is one of the keys to the unusual success of the Pentecostal churches in Latin America, which, in addition to a number of other extremely significant appeals to the Latin temperament (factors which are beyond the scope of this article), have succeeded in large measure in making people of all classes, and especially the very lowest, to feel that they belong, are needed, and must make their own distinctive contribution within the community of believers which recognizes them as an integral part. This sense of belonging, of social security, and of being "indispensable" has resulted in the Pentecostal group's far outdistancing so many of the denominations which have depended more upon trained leadership, foreign funds, and an emphasis upon what the

church could do for the people, rather than what the people must do for the church. In other words, the Pentecostal churches have succeeded in large measure in creating a face-to-face, living fellowship in the midst of a competing, impersonal agglomeration of people.

## Problems of a Divided Society

Within a face-to-face society there may be an almost insuperable barrier which excludes one group from any vital social contacts with the other. In Latin America this situation exists in those communities which contain both Indians and Latins. Except for some of the strictly primitive groups (as in Amazonia and a few other marginal areas), the Indians of Latin America are a part of the larger social unit. The culture is basically a folk culture, and the Indians stand in a dependency relationship. The whites are dependent upon the Indians for some simple artifacts and for work and raw products from their small farms. The Indians are dependent upon the whites for legal rights, guarantee and possession of their farms, rudimentary education, and all sorts of manufactured articles. There is an almost complete symbiosis, but with the white community being largely parasitic upon the labors of the Indians.

This type of arrangement, involving dependency and exploitation, almost inevitably produces severe strains of feeling, deep suspicion, and outright antagonism. One would think that in view of this situation the Protestant missionary could make a strong appeal to the Indian to "throw off the shackles" and to separate himself from the religious system which is identified with the upper class. However, this is not so easy, for the Indian knows full well that his economic and social security depends very largely upon his keeping in good with his patroncitos,[2] or palancas as they are called in Ecuador. Some missions have attempted to minister exclusively to Indians and peons and have discovered that unless they actually controlled the land, as in the case of the Canadian Baptist mission in Guatajata, Bolivia, they had little or no success. In fact, some of the people whom they helped the most seemed most intent upon proving their continued identity with the upper class by spending large sums of money on liquor with which to

entertain the patroncitos. Wherever missions have experienced any appreciable success in working in such divided societies it has been found that in some measure they either acted as the patron (as in the case of the Canadian Baptist mission in Guatajata, Bolivia), or there were some Evangelicals in the Latin society who would act as padrinos for the Evangelical population. This means that the presentation of the gospel must be directed at the entire society, so that within the newly formed Protestant group there may be some who may fulfill the vital function of the "upper class."

## Means of Communication

Without doubt, one of the most difficult aspects of evangelism in Latin America is to discover those means by which the communication of the gospel may be made in a relevant and socially acceptable manner. This does not mean that the Good News must be distorted in order to accommodate it to men's ideas. Rather, it must be presented in such a context as to make it really "Good News," not just foreign propaganda.

One Protestant missionary working in an Indian community of Ecuador discovered that the people were not at all interested in the beliefs of the Protestants, but they were very anxious to know about the Catholic doctrines. Accordingly, he offered to tell them about the various Roman Catholic beliefs and in a series of evening meetings in his own home he explained to them, without attempting to criticize or argue, the various doctrines of the Roman church. He used a Roman Catholic catechism and employed a Roman Catholic copy of the Scriptures. After several evenings of teaching and discussion, some of the group insisted that he tell them what the Protestants believed. At their invitation, he then explained, in the same objective and meaningful way, what he as a Protestant believed. In the very community where other missionaries had been singularly unsuccessful in presenting the gospel this missionary was able to communicate effectively, because he spoke to their need and in a context which was relevant to their understanding at the time.

A missionary in West Africa made it a regular practice in his earlier days of itinerant evangelism to stop in villages

for several days and in the evenings to inquire of the elders as to their belief in God. He never tried to explain his own faith until asked to do so by the elders, who invariably inquired of him after he had spent long hours in learning from them. The missionary's purpose was not, however, just to elicit curiosity. He was convinced that in order to tell the people about God he had first to learn what they knew about God, or otherwise he might fail utterly to make his message relevant.

One outstanding missionary in Peru has made it a practice never to enter a village to evangelize the people except at the express invitation of some person within the village. His Quechua helpers often enter new villages in order to establish important first contacts, but the missionary has become convinced that if he is not to thwart the ultimate effectiveness of his ministry, he must enter a village as a guest of a member of the community, who will not only guarantee his safety during his stay but will be an important means of inviting others to hear the Good News, brought by the "foreigner."

There is a considerable tendency for missionaries to "barge ahead" irrespective of the local situation. One way in which this is done is through the free distribution of Scriptures and other Christian literature. Such materials seem to be so cheap and people appear to be so ready to accept whatever is offered free that missionaries are deceived as to the ultimate effectiveness of their endeavors. In the first place, a high percentage of such literature is never read, and not infrequently the people react to the gospel as being nothing more than cheap propaganda. What is even worse, the distributor loses the priceless opportunity to communicate to the people in a context which they can fully understand, namely, the necessity for the bookseller to convince people of the desirability of his product. In the process of selling, whether or not the person buys, the bookseller has the chance of witnessing to the truth and effectiveness of the Good News. He also has a chance to challenge the prospective customer to study this for himself and to accept it. However, the man who is distributing free literature is immediately classed as a propagandist, a job for which he must be well paid, and his own testimony is relatively valueless.

The necessity of communicating within a meaningful context may sometimes lead to amazing methods. One agriculturalist working with the YMCA in Mexico discovered that in the area in which he had set out to help the people, everyone was suspicious of his efforts and refused to listen to his advice. Accordingly, the agriculturalist proceeded to introduce improved varieties of vegetables, grains, and fruits, and employed new methods of putting humus back into the soil by the generous use of compost made from abundant organic material in the area. So the villagers would not "misinterpret" his efforts, he put up a high fence around his gardens and ostensibly attempted to protect his choice products. The inevitable result was that the people stole his products in order to sell in the nearby markets. This method of teaching might seem unnecessarily "indirect," but it was effective for it was fully meaningful within the context of these people's lives.

The importance of communicating by identification has been so emphasized that some missionaries have wrongly exaggerated its significance to the point of thinking that identification consisted primarily in imitation, largely of an external type. This has led some missionaries purposely to dress poorly and to live in ostensibly humble quarters. The people, however, have detected the false ring in this type of superficial imitation and have reckoned it as a kind of cheap paternalism, which in fact it is. The identification which is required is not imitation, but full participation as a member of the society. In order to participate effectively one must not deny his own cultural heritage--something which cannot be done even if one wished to do so--but to employ this background for the benefit of the total constituency.

Some missionaries have assumed that "natives can best reach natives" (as they have so often framed the principle). In a sense this is quite true, but at the same time it is a general experience of missionaries that Latin American converts often refuse to work among people of the very class from which they themselves have come or among those who are in the immediate class below them, especially if these classes are both rather low on the social scale. This should not be too hard to understand, for any convert who has advanced in the

social structure as the result of hard work and diligent application often feels quite insecure in his new social position. To return immediately to work among people representing the very class from which he has raised himself would seem to endanger his status. Furthermore, a great deal of the education which he probably has received in mission schools has prepared him for a middle class social position and in a sense he has been "de-classified" as far as his original status was concerned. He no longer really feels at home. But even those who have not been educated up and out of a class are often reluctant to minister to people immediately beneath them, for it would seem to imply that they are lowering their own status and hence endangering their prestige position within the society. On the other hand, such persons are often quite willing to work among those considerably below their own status, for then they do not feel that there is any danger of being mistaken for a member of such an inferior class. In a sense this explains why it is somewhat easier to get missionaries from the United States to work in areas in which nationals of the respective countries are reluctant to serve. The missionary runs no risk of losing status. In fact, among the in-group of which he is a part in the United States his very going to such "benighted heathen" enhances his prestige, but this is not the case with so-called "national workers."

The sensitivity of national workers to these problems of class within their own society must be fully recognized if one is to understand their special problems and some of the reasons which dictate what appears to be such strange behavior. In one instance, for example, an Indian from southern Mexico went off to study in a Bible school in Guatemala. Upon his return he began preaching in Spanish, which he did with considerable skill, but of course his audience understood little if anything of what he was saying. This continued for about three weeks, after which time this young Indian pastor shifted to the Indian language and has continued to use it ever since. The ability to use Spanish was an essential symbol of his new status, and once this was adequately confirmed, he could then safely afford to identify himself with the Indian constituency.

This principle of security in social position helps to explain why it is sometimes easier to get university students to undertake work in some slum area than to get people who have just emerged from the slums to return to them in order to minister. This also explains why one Negro pastor in Cuba found it difficult to work among his own people, for they preferred to have a white minister, for this gave their church more prestige. On the other hand, a well-educated constituency of whites was quite willing to accept this brilliant Negro, for the prestige of this group would not be endangered.

## Backsliding and Class Identification

One of the apparently puzzling phenomena in the experience of some evident converts is the almost pathetic concern for reinstatement which characterizes those who turn from Protestantism and go back into their former socio-religious grouping. Time and again missionaries have mentioned how incredible it was that certain outstanding people who seemed to show every promise of developing into outstanding leaders within the Protestant movement would go "so far back into sin," once they dissociated themselves from the Evangelical constituency. In fact, such persons often become far more addicted to their favorite vices than they ever were before coming in contact with the gospel. It would seem that the more conspicuous has been their testimony the more severe is their backsliding. The sociological explanation for this is the fact that such persons feel constrained to do all they can to be accepted again in the constituency of which they were formerly a part. To do this they must completely violate the mores associated with the Protestant element in order to prove to their non-Protestant friends that they no longer belong to the Protestant group. A somewhat similar reaction occurs, of course, with the new convert to Protestantism. In order to be accepted within the Evangelical community, he often symbolizes his break with the past by strong denunciation of his former friends, publicized breaking or burning of images, unnecessarily harsh denunciation of the Roman Catholic Church, and even unwarranted disrespect for the religious sentiments of conscientious people.

## The Work of the Holy Spirit

From what has been said up to this point some readers might conclude that we have little or no regard for the role of the Holy Spirit in the program of evangelism. Quite to the contrary, the more one studies the methods and procedures of foreign missions the more one becomes convinced of the function of the Spirit of God in transforming the lives of people. However, it does seem quite evident that God's Spirit works with and not contrary to the basic need of human beings, as exemplified in certain aspects of social structure. A study of the human elements in the divine-human drama of God's role in human history does not deny God's part; it only helps one to appreciate better the way God has chosen to work within the context of human life by the principle of incarnation, rather than from outside by a continued series of supernatural interventions.

Those who fully appreciate the living reality of the incarnational element in our Christian faith take seriously the meaning of revelation by word and by life ("the Word became flesh"). On the basis of this the fundamental procedure of missions may be developed in terms of identification ("He humbled himself") and participation ("He was tempted in all points"). Herein lies the key to effective witness, sacrificial ministry, and vital growth for the churches in Latin America.

## Footnotes

1. See Eugene A. Nida, "The Roman Catholic, Communist, and Protestant Approach to Social Structure," Practical Anthropology, Vol. 4, No. 6 (November-December, 1957) pp. 209-219.

2. Landlord and sponsor

# A RESERVE FROM WITHIN[1]

A. Vilakazi

[Synopsis: Africans are not, as is popularly believed, a culturally homogeneous group. They belong to different classes which can be correlated to the different agents of change at work in the reserves, each of which produces a specific type of human end-product.

Christianity produces personalities and communities with value-systems, attitudes, and characteristic patterns of behavior which differentiate them sharply from Traditionalists who form the cultural base-line from which the Christians have evolved. As a group the Christians are progressive, West-oriented, and their whole world-view is supported by the Christian ethic.

The products of secular agents, commerce, industry, and the migratory labor system are that disorganized, irresponsible, and hedonistic flotsam and jetsam of African society. This is the group on whom generalizations are made about educated and Christian Africans, although it is neither Christian nor educated.

Lastly there are the Traditionalists who strenuously resist change in an attempt to stop cultural disorganization, and to re-establish the equilibrium and norms of the old society. It is, however, a fast-disappearing group.]

## Social Stratification Among the Nyuswa and Qadi Tribes

Contrary to popular belief that all Africans belong to the same social class (evidence of which is the fact that every African male is a boy or a John to the Whites, and every woman a girl or an Annie) one finds among the Nyuswa and the Qadi tribes clear class distinctions which the people make and recognize in their everyday behavior patterns. This social stratification is no longer based on the old "tier upon tier" principle which distinguished clearly between an aristocracy and a commonalty, both of which derived from inherited status. Sta-

tus is now achieved or sometimes conferred on commoners by the Native Affairs Department which appoints chiefs (from among common people) who derive their social power from the White government of which they are agents. (Conquest by the Whites has a general leveling-down effect.)

Among the Nyuswa the hereditary principle, which bestowed a mystical quality on the credentials of the chiefs by reason of its association with traditional custom and which therefore gave them a place of natural leadership, was removed when Sir Theophilus Shepstone sent the Nyuswa chief Mshiwa to the Port Shepstone area to rule over some tribes there. Likewise, the Qadi section is ruled from the distance of Inanda, and, as the people truly observe, "This is the land of izinduna" (headmen). Both tribes are, in effect, ruled by the chief's headmen, and the chief comes, perhaps once in six months, chiefly to confer with the Native Commissioner. The headmen, it will be noted, are not hereditary.

The first and most important distinction which the people make, and one which strikes a visitor immediately on his arrival, is one between the Christians or School People and the non-Christians or heathens (or, as they are sometimes referred to contemptuously by the Christians, amaqaba, i.e. raw, uncultured, heathen people).

A closer acquaintance with the social situation, however, soon reveals another class which both the Christians and the heathens recognize. This is what they call the amagxagxa.

Let us analyze the differences between these classes.

Non-Christians

The amabhinca are the so-called heathen or pagans. They are the Traditionalists who adhere tenaciously to what they believe to be the Zulu traditional patterns of life: the visible manifestations of which are Zulu traditional dress, the different typically Zulu hair-do for women, the slit ears decorated with beads or stumps of reeds or small painted blocks of wood, etc. They are marked, too, by Zulu conserva-

tism and by elaborate Zulu etiquette. Their marriages are still polygamous in fact or in intent (as when a man has one wife but is married by customary union, which leaves the way open for him to marry another wife).

The organization of the family and the division of labor in the home is still very much as it used to be in Zululand as far as we can ascertain from studies of the Zulus.[2] Even with this group, however, Western civilization in the shape of schools, hospitals, traders' stores, buses, taxis, and trains, and Western industry have brought about notable changes. The women now use Western materials instead of skins. Only a married or an engaged woman must still wear a skin skirt, but there is free use of vests, towels, and other materials for all sorts of purposes; the men who would originally have used an ibheshu now use short trousers and shirts with their tails out. Food habits have changed markedly, and the influence of the East is very clearly seen in the very common use of pepper, curry powder, and chilies as seasoning, the use of vegetables like brinjals, and the taste for curried meat or chicken. Tea, sugar, salt, and bread are very much in evidence in many homes, and most of the kitchen utensils are Western.

However, the social values of this group derive from the Zulu traditional norms, and there is a conscious and freely expressed rejection of all European ways, and a clinging to the old traditional ones.

The numerical strength of this group, among the Nyuswa in particular, and the tremendous social pressures and sanctions which go with its numbers, are strong enough to win back many of its children, particularly girls who go to school and would otherwise be recruited into the Christian group. Thus many of the boys and girls who have had from three to six years of schooling revert back to traditional ways as soon as they leave school. They go to school to acquire reading and writing skills, and as soon as they get back home they take off "the school clothes" and are forced to conform to the general pattern obtaining in their social environment. In a very real sense, then, the putting on and taking off of school clothes is a symbolic act of moving in and out of the two culture worlds in which they live during their school years.

The Christian Group or "School People"

The alternative term is significant, as it shows that in the African mind education and Christianity are interchangeable terms. A Christian is assumed to be educated, and an educated man to be a Christian. It is interesting, too, to note that while among the heathen a child is told to take off his school clothes and don his ibheshu after school hours, among the Christians the child is told to put away the clean school clothes and put on the not-so-clean workaday ones. These remain the shirt and trousers for the boys and bloomers and dress for the girls. The difference is important, as it involves an attitude towards the human body and children are definitely conditioned to particular reactions on the question of modesty. For the Christian, trousers and bloomers are important because they hide the genitals, so that it is not uncommon to find boys and girls whose only articles of wear are trousers and bloomers, respectively, with no other covering. Among the heathen, children move about in the nude at this stage.

The Christian group is characterized by specific cultural discontinuities vis-à-vis the Zulu traditional culture which is the parent culture. In general, much of their behavior patterns and institutional life are formed by Christian teaching, but in many of their customs and habits one finds interesting syncretistic tendencies which give a Zulu idiom even to the obviously Christian institutions. Specifically, the Christians profess to adhere to the Christian principles of morality, the visible signs of which are European clothes for modesty; monogamous marriages contracted by Christian rites; the ideal of chastity before marriage; a rejection of the levirate (ukungena custom by which a man inherits his brother's wife or wives and raises seed to him) as being repugnant to Christian morality; a duty to send their children to school; a refined form of language purged of all vulgarities, using inelegant euphemisms and tortuous circumlocutions. They are marked, too, by regular attendance in church; abstaining from drinking beer of any sort for some Protestants, and the adoption of the tea-drinking habit. Tea is now referred to as the Christian's beer. They attempt to keep away

from all pagan rituals such as the bringing back of the spirit of the dead man, pagan weddings, and for certain sects, the "washing of hands" ceremony after a death is taboo. It is also expected that the Christian group will not fail in charity towards all people. These are the things which even the heathen will mention as characteristic of the Christian group.

The homes of Christians are, both in structure and character, modeled on Western standards. Kitchen economy also differs significantly from the traditional patterns, so much so that the Christians are often described as stingy people because they tend to conserve their food resources more than the non-Christians. They do not give beer parties except when they have some work to do, and even then they "time" the work-party and insist that only those who worked will be rewarded with beer--a concept totally foreign to the Traditionalists. As a result, men rarely congregate at a Christian home to talk over local politics or merely to spend the day and feel that life is worth while. For the Christian a man must always be at work (dignity of labor), while for the non-Christian, he likes to take time off, meet his fellows, and be "just a human being" with a frothy pot of beer before him. The Christian homes are mostly square or they are rondavels. They are furnished with chairs, tables, cupboards, kitchen dressers, and, among the Qadi, stoves (coal and Primus), radio sets, sofas, dining-room and bedroom suites are not uncommon. There are a few books in the homes, which include invariably the Bible and a hymnbook and a few schoolbooks which are or were used by the children at school. There is also very commonly found a clock and some family pictures which are hung on the walls.

The food habits of the Christians differ from those of the non-Christians. First, the three-meals-a-day routine is common in many homes. It is unusual to get a Christian home which does not serve a meal at lunch time. Breakfast is served early enough for the children to have had it before leaving for school--and that is between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Lunch is served between 1 and 2 p.m. and supper any time from 7:30 to 9 p.m. They use more sugar, tea, fats, condensed milk, and other tinned foods. Tea is always offered to a stranger as hospitality, and people feel very uncomfortable and apologize

profusely if they cannot show this hospitality. One Christian woman said to the writer: "Please do not report me to Msimbithi, for I have no tea leaves and Msimbithi has just written an article in the Ilanga lase Natal about how stingy we Christians are" (Msimbithi, we may explain, was a newspaper columnist whose articles, which appeared regularly in the Ilanga lase Natal, were a humorous but much-dreaded commentary on the social habits of Christians and educated Africans in general).

This leads us to another social characteristic of the Christians: their newspaper-mindedness and sensitivity to newspaper criticism of their social customs. It is difficult to meet any Christian in the whole of the Reserve, or any literate person, for that matter, who has not heard of Msimbithi and who does not use Msimbithi's phraseology to characterize modern behavior patterns. The Ilanga among the Protestants, and UmAfrika among Catholics, are very widely read.

In general, then, among the Nyuswa and Qadi, Christians are marked by a progressive outlook, by a tremendous keenness on education, a definite West-oriented outlook, and a firmly held belief that a man must work. All this undergirds a firm commitment to the Christian religion that has been handed down to them by missionaries. As a result of this general outlook, the traditional institutions and behavior patterns have been very greatly affected. Kinship solidarity which has been the cornerstone of social organization has been very badly shaken. There is not, any more, the ready appeal to the kinship group in cases of sickness, quarrels, or for mutual help in times of trouble. There have arisen or are emerging new, church-centered social groupings which are taking the place of the kinship group. These are provided by the Women's Union, the Mothers' Union, and by a recently formed Zenzele Club which is the African version of the Y.W.C.A. Thus, when A had a quarrel with B (a case which would have gone to the Chief's Court or the Umndeni Court (Lineage Court) among the non-Christians), they referred their matter to the church leaders, who settled it. Again, when Mr. and Mrs. X quarreled over the alleged infidelity of the husband, the wife did not take the matter to the lineage court, but appealed to the church councils. Similarily, when Mrs. C was sick, she asked for the priest

to be called in to give her the last sacraments and she refused to consult a diviner. Again, when the evangelist among the Nyuswa Lutherans was building a house, it was the church women and men who arranged a work party, supplied all the food and drinks, which included beer and a soft drink prepared from mealie porridge. When a Christian dies, it is the Christian group that handles the corpse, contributes money for burial expenses and food, and, what is of great importance, insists that as Christians they are not going to be cleansed for having handled the corpse! (Traditional custom demands that people's hands should be "washed with a goat" a week or so after the funeral, because they have defiled themselves by handling a dead body. Until such cleansing takes place, they are ritually unclean.)

We should not, however, leave you with the impression that the Christian way of life is marked only by cultural discontinuities. It is also characterized by many old culture patterns. Such, for example, are behavior patterns which accompany the whole of the marriage negotiations. There is the old custom of asking for the girl's hand in marriage still accompanied by a cautious approach by the boy's people; the giving of the gifts; the usual reporting to the ancestral spirits implicit in the slaughter of the goats to receive the go-between; and the beasts that are slaughtered on the wedding day are still the same and still perform the old functions. Obviously, the "reporting" aspect of the marriage negotiations is not seen by the Christians as incompatible with their Christian beliefs; and when I put the question to them, they looked at me suspiciously and dismissed the whole thing politely with a gentle suggestion that I was being facetious. The love-making complex has altered slightly. The Christians do not court as openly as their non-Christian brothers, but the Don Juan outlook, although roundly condemned by Christians, still has much motivational force. The Christians have in some sects (notably the Cushites) adopted the old method of having a senior girl to take charge of all the girls, supervise their love affairs, and inform the class-leader as soon as a girl falls in love. The boy is then interviewed by the girl's class-leader with a view to persuading him to join the church. The general view on the question of the soma custom which allowed

unmarried couples to meet aand have intercrural sex play is that it is forbidden by the church. "But," said one man, "we have to be realistic and accept the fact that, as we live in a cultural environment which sanctions such practices, we Christians can do no more than pronounce against it." Another man, a minister of a separatist church, said that in his church he had insisted on premarital chastity, but had forbidden any of his church members to baneka the young. The word baneka was significant, for it is used metaphorically to mean "lighting up" people in the dark, as does a flash of lightning, and thus catching them in their sins.

Christian life is also marked by many interesting adaptations--syncretistic tendencies, as we have called them. One of the most interesting of these is seen at Christmas time. To the Christians, of course, it is a holy day and they go to church and hold services. But one does not have, among African Christians, the "holy-day" aspect of Christmas dominating the day as is the case, for example, among American Christians in New England. Christmas, among African Christians, is marked by a great festive air. It gives them a convenient excuse and opportunity to capitalize on the highly valued cultural norms of generosity and openhandedness. It is as if, after having restrained themselves for the whole year in a desperate and soul-cramping effort at being frugal (a Christian teaching), a safety valve were opened and all the pent-up urge to give exploded! Thus it is that on Christmas day all kinds of food are pressed on every caller. To excuse oneself on the grounds of satiety is considered ill-mannered and could, in fact, be construed as an offence to the giver, because it carries with it the implication that you suspect the food to be poisoned. The right thing to do is to nibble at the food, and then say, "Nobody can finish the food of the head of a kraal," by which you mean, "Your generosity is boundless." A peculiar feature of Christmas is that, whereas the most appreciated gifts are unsolicited, the Christmas spirit allows for the people to greet you with an invitation to give; and when so invited, you would have a strong streak of meanness in you if you did not.

The syncretistic tendencies which have produced so many cultural hybrids are an interesting example of the African's

genius in meeting new situations or in providing institutional machinery for new problems that arise in a rapidly changing cultural world.

They can be explained, I suggest, by a conceptual scheme borrowed from the practice of African medicine. There are two concepts in the armory of Zulu practice of medicine which become operative in this cultural hybridization. One is to procure from a fellow practitioner some of his potent drugs, mix and blend them with your own drug, and in the process give not only the drug procured from outside, but also your own, greater potency.

Now, in the culture-contact situation, the African is impressed by the tremendous power of the White man; and he assumes, correctly, that the White man's power and phenomenal successes are all due to his cultural tools. Using this concept, he tells himself that he must get some of these tools of the White man; but to make them formidable, they must be mixed and blended with his own cultural tools. The result of this blending is always a new cultural pattern which is neither European nor African, but one which serves a purpose and meets the exigencies of the new social situation. These syncretistic movements which are found in every aspect of African life today, must be seen, therefore, not as disintegration or degeneracy, but rather as reintegrations!

While I am about syncretism, I might perhaps be allowed a little digression to suggest an answer to the accusations, often leveled at the Africans, that they are hastily casting away their old cultures and embracing a (foreign) European culture.

I suggest that the syncretistic tendencies belie such accusations. People very often forget that there is nothing morally or intellectually admirable about sticking to cultural institutions and behavior patterns merely because they belong to a people's historic past even when such institutions and culture patterns fail to pass the test of modern conditions. One could sum up the matter very unkindly by saying, with Professor Whitehead, that the criticism is based on a belief

which is "warped by the vicious assumption that each generation will live substantially amid conditions governing the lives of its fathers and will transmit those conditions to mold with equal force the lives of its children."[3]

Flotsam and Jetsam

I come now to a third social group which consists of that amorphous flotsam and jetsam of society which is neigher pagan nor Christian in the sense of sharing the religious and cultural norms of either group. These amagxagxa are an in-between group about which one can make no predictions and about which there are no expectations with regard to its code of behavior and social ethics. Interestingly enough, the word igxagxa, which is the singular form of amagxagxa, is used by Zulu speakers to designate a European "hobo," about whom people have no reasonable expectations regarding his code of morals and behavior.

It is very easy to mistake this group for Christians, because it has thrown away the outward appearances of traditionalism, but that is the only resemblance between it and the Christian group. As one non-Christian put it to me: "Whereas they dress like Christians, they go to beer drinks, take part in pagan rituals, eat the flesh of dead animals (as distinct from slaughtered ones), behave disgracefully, and in general, do all the things which the Christians do not do." Another old man, a Christian, described them as "lawless people who have no heads or addresses." The phrase "with no addresses" does not mean that these people are vagrants. It means that ethically or normatively they cannot be placed. Another Traditionalist described them as amahumusha, an old-fashioned word which means an untrustworthy person, or, in modern parlance, a tsotsi. Yet another Traditionalist dismissed them contemptuously as "ignoramuses" culturally and "people without law." Thus, the general feeling among the Nyuswa and the Qadi tribesmen is that the amagxagxa are the criminals of society.

They are the completely disorganized and dissociated persons who have broken away from traditionalism, but, unlike the Christians, have not found any new integrative force and have

not, therefore, developed a new consistent code of morals and new patterns of social behavior. Their morality is expediency and convenience. In Lippman's phrase, "having destroyed their gods, whirlwind became king"[4] in their lives, for the destruction of their old faiths removed the "still point," as T. S. Eliot[5] would put it, around which their universe revolved.

The amagxagxa group is the result of Westernization by secular agencies as opposed to Westernization by Christian missionaries. Most of these people have acquired a smattering of Western civilization by working in towns or by working on European farms. Others have gone to school and acquired reading and writing skills; but they have not imbibed the value systems which are Western controls.

It is remarkable that the acquisition of what Linton[6] calls "instrumental values" has a tendency to undermine conceptual values, which form the "underpinning" of a people's whole life. This is exactly what has happened with the amagxagxa. They have thrown away traditional ways but have not put anything in their stead. As a result, they are contemptuous of all standards of morality, treat with disrespect the chief and all he represents, while adopting a sneering attitude towards Christian institutions and practices. They affect smart city manners and pretend not to understand the rustic ways of the Reserve people. Two instances will illustrate what we mean. A young woman who might have been a Christian by outward appearances was at the Health Center the other day with head wounds. I was interested and asked her how she had got them. Her answer was: "We fight in our part of the country." On being questioned further, she explained that she was fighting with another woman, her sister-in-law, because they had called each other prostitutes. Her sister-in-law, she informed me, was bringing too many men into the home, and when she objected, it was pointed out that she also had her lovers. A fight ensued, the result of which was a wound on her head. On being questioned as to what church she went to, she said, "Oh, neither of us belong to the church."

I submit that in both the Christian and the non-Christian, i.e. traditional groups, such a thing could not have taken

place. There is, at any rate, strong moral condemnation of women who fight in both these groups. Another interesting example of the typically igxagxa attitude came to my notice when a young man, again well dressed, came to a group of people. He spoke glibly about Zulu customs which he did not understand, and when it was suggested that Zulu custom demanded that he should marry the girl who was nursing his child, he flew into a rage and told some that he would "club" anybody who came to talk "native" nonsense to him. He was not used to these Native customs, he said, as he lived in town. The men listened to him silently and remarked, after he had left, that he behaved like a typical "Colored person."

There are more amagxagxa among the Nyuswa than there are among the Qadi tribe. This is explained by the fact that whereas there has been a concentration of missionary work among the Qadi, it has been at a minimum among the Nyuswa. Not only are the Catholics active among the Qadi, but the Qadi chief, Mandlakayise Ngcobo, gave his blessing to the activities of the Methodist African preachers, whom he encouraged and assisted in building a church which he said was to be for his tribesmen. This meant that the Qadi tribesmen could be Christian and still be acceptable to their chief. Incidentally, Mandlakayise had already assisted the American Board missionaries at Inanda to build a church.

Is the Nyuswa Reserve Typical of the Native Reserves in Other Parts of the Country?

The question may legitimately be asked as to the extent to which the Nyuswa Reserve is typical of the reserves throughout the Union of South Africa, or, at any rate, of the reserves in Natal. I propose to answer the question after the fashion of Dr. Oeser and Dr. Emery[7] by considering the following questions:

(a) whether there is as much, or more, or less culture change taking place in other reserves;

(b) whether the agents of change are the same throughout South Africa and whether there are no self-contained, contact-free areas which have not been influenced by Western civilization;

(c) whether the results of culture contact are the same in other areas as they are among the Nyuswa and the Qadi tribes; and finally,

(d) whether the social classes that have been described for the Nyuswa reserve do not appear in different forms and/or proportions as a function of the concentration and intensity of the activities of the agents and the length of time during which they have been operating in different reserves.

To the first question, about the occurrence of culture change in other reserves in South Africa, it is possible to return a positive reply. This is based on my fairly intimate knowledge of life in the reserves of Natal and Zululand. I am, in face, of the opinion that the Nyuswa reserve is among the more conservative and least Christianized areas, and that the tempo of change is not nearly as fast or as advanced as it is in other areas, particularly the mission reserves.

Studies[8] that have been made in the reserves show that throughout South Africa the agents of change are missionary Christian work and secular agents like commerce and industry and living on European farms. In South Africa it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to find an area which was self-contained and untouched by Western influences.

In this paper I have attempted to suggest explicitly and implicitly that the different types of agents at work in the reserves can be associated with specific types of end-products, and that the Africans who live on the reserve do not belong to the same class and cannot be treated as if they were a culturally homogeneous group. Thus I have suggested that the missionaries have produced Christian personalities and communities which are marked by specific cultural discontinuities from the traditional Africans who are the products of slow evolutionary changes. The Christians are progressive, West-oriented, and their lives are supported by Christian principles. On the other hand, the end-products of secular agents, i.e., of industry and commerce and migratory labor, are disorganized and dissociated persons (culturally). They are the amagxagxa who, like Bunyan's Christian, are wallowing in a

confused cultural slough of despond. They have no set standards of behavior, have not achieved any integration, and their morality is convenience and/or expediency. It is important to note that these are not disillusioned Christians who have tried Christianity and found it wanting. Nor are they the counterpart of the European materialist whose intellectual rejection of Christianity has led him to a materialist philosophy. They are no more than pagans who have merely acquired the outward trappings of Western civilization but have missed the values inherent in the Western way of life. These are the people on whom generalizations about African Christians and educated persons are based.

Finally, there are the die-hards who resist change and stick tenaciously to their traditional culture. These are the people whom I have called the Traditionalists.

One should make the important qualification that in the reserves on which missionaries have been active for a long time, like the Inanda and Groutville Mission Reserves, the descending order of magnitude of these groups will be as follows: Christians, amagxagxa, and the Traditionalists. This, it will be seen, is the reverse of the Nyuswa situation.

Footnotes

1. This is a slightly abridged version of a paper with the same title, published in African Studies, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1957. We are grateful to the Editorial Committee of African Studies and to Prof. A. Vilakazi for permission to reprint it in this form.

2. Bryant, A. T.: The Zulu People. Shuter and Shooter, 1949. Krige, E. J.: Social System of the Zulus. Longmans, 1936.

3. Whitehead, A. N.: "Introduction" to W. B. Donham's Business Adrift. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1931. pp. xviii-xix.

4. Lippman, W.: Preface to Morals.

5. Eliot, T. S.: "Triumphal March."

6. Linton, R.: "The Problem of Universal Values" in Method and Perspective in Anthropology. Minnesota Press. 1954. pp. 145-168

7. Oeser, O. A., and Emery, F. E.: Social Structure and Personality in a Rural Community. Routledge, and Kegan Paul. 1954. pp. 222-227.

8. e.g. M. Hunter's Reaction to Conquest; Ashton, The Basuto; H. Kuper's Uniform in Colour; Krige and Krige, Realm of the Rain Queen.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Reprinting of PA Articles Wanted

Should you decide, at some future date, to reprint any of the earlier 1957 issues which I have missed, I would be most happy to purchase a copy. I understand there was an exceptionally good article in one of those earlier issues (1957) by Dr. Nida which I am anxious to get hold of.

Thank you very kindly for your service. I am eagerly looking forward to receiving PA again, as I find many of the articles most helpful.

Edith West
c/o Summer Institute of Linguistics
Aiyura (via Lae)
Territory of New Guinea

[We hope to reprint many of the best articles from the first four years of Practical Anthropology in a volume, together with some new, unpublished material. The manuscript is in preparation. Watch for announcements later.-Ed.]

# CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURES

## The Missionary and Cultural Diffusion - I[1]

Two Gbaya workmen at Batouri, French Camerouns, had a prolonged and vociferous argument which they finally brought to the missionary to arbitrate. Their stories revealed only that the first man accused the second of stealing his money and the second in turn accused the first of killing his dog. In the missionary's view of the matter it was a question of determining the "truth" of the stealing and the killing. Since the missionary was unable to prove or disprove either story, he refused to listen to further discussion of the case. The two disputants were at a loss to understand why the white man with his marvelous machines and wealth had no means of discovering the person who was at fault. Consequently the two went to a native medicine doctor who performed a series of magical rites to determine if the man accused of dog killing had the power to kill the dog. The missionary had not bothered to ask how the dog was killed. The native doctor knew that the recognized process was by turning oneself into a snake and biting the dog. The accused dog slayer underwent the rites of the native doctor who "proved" beyond a doubt that the man did not possess the power to transform his body into a snake. The logical conclusion was that he was not guilty. Therefore his accuser was forced by the local African authorities to pay the accused a sum of money plus two goats.

## The Problem of Two Contrasting Views

The argument which is presented here is essentially that the modern missionary's inherited view of the universe is an inseparable part of his own ethos (the distinctive point of view of his culture) with which he comes to terms with Christianity. His thinking and action are cast in a framework which is for him necessary and meaningful but which appears to the folk sccieties quite often as meaningless. There is therefore an inevitable confusion which arises in these two ways of thinking. The missionary will not forsake his view for what appears to him as superstition, and the folk can only partake in the modern missionary's point of view as they are brought

into a systematic contact with it. This usually means formalized education.

It is often remarked in anthropological writings and in the pages of PA that life in the primitive world is viewed as a whole synthesis in which all of life partakes in the religious feeling of things. Whether we agree to this proposition or not depends largely upon the way in which we define the religious. However, there can be little dispute with the observation that the folk societies do not divide the rational and nonrational into separate spheres in the way modern societies do. Some anthropologists such as the late Lévy-Bruhl attempted unsuccessfully to tell us that primitive man has his own kind of psychology and logic, and that in these lay the essential differences between the folk and modern societies. Anyone who has lived in a folk culture is certainly tempted to make such statements. However, this position fails to see that a set of propositions about any matter can be exceedingly logical and at the same time very untrue. The people of the folk societies differ from moderns in that they have a different ontological perspective, a different sense of the nature of existence. That is, there exists a unity of life in which things are, regardless of their nature, interrelated. Whereas modern man assumes a uniform order of nature which operates within its own fixed laws, the folk man assumes an interrelatedness between man and nature. Therefore man's spiritual activities can effect changes in the natural world simply because they both share in the same metaphysic. In central Africa a parasitic vine growing on a tree is viewed as an indication that the tree has a supernatural power which causes the vine to grow on that particular tree. By the same token, if a man is able to secure material wealth, it is because he partakes in the same endowment as the tree which attracts the vine.

Modern man inherited from Greek culture a way of viewing the world in which uniform order is assumed and sought out. What is not scientific is usually admitted and there is little attempt to placate, cajole, and appeal to nature. Rather, modern man controls nature in so far as he can by employing natural laws to do so. Moderns are the heirs of two vast changes

in cultural history. The first is the separation of God from the rest of nature which the Hebrews gave us, and the second is the Greek gift of separating out order in nature as immanent without any reference to God or the gods.[2] These two historical developments, in which the folk societies do not share, serve to drive the deepest imaginable wedge between the thought of a twentieth-century missionary and the people of his folk congregation.

A simple illustration is the case of the bush fire hunts in Africa. At the end of a strenuous day's hunt behind leaping walls of flaming grass fires the hunter may wearily trudge home with nothing in his hands but his smoke-stained spears. To the missionary it is obviously the case that the animals escaped or that there were none in the area. To the African there is a reason that goes deeper. Something went wrong with the procedure which is carefully executed in order to assure the kill. The procedure is partly in taboos kept by the women. If a woman has been talking noisily in her compound instead of sitting quietly in the house, she is at fault and will be punished. Perhaps a careless wife has swept the floor of her house. She has thereby caused the animals for miles away to flee. This is due to no lack of logic but rather to the assumption that spirits of dead animals must not be aroused durint the hunt. The relatedness is vividly assumed to exist.

## Confusion over the Missionary's Viewpoint

The missionary's dichotomy of natural and supernatural strikes the folk Christians and non-Christians as an unintelligible confusion. The folk man is in no intellectual position to see this problem nor to appreciate it. He does not have at his disposal the means of knowing how the missionary divides up the universe. Consequently as the missionary flits back and forth in his conversation between his worlds of the religious and natural, the mind of the folk man gets lost in the switches. The missionary doctor may carefully explain microbes to an ailing native and allow him to see them dashing about under the microscope. When the missionary has done that and then from a bottle of medicine he destroys the whole bunch and says, "You see, just take your medicine and you'll be all

right," the native is most likely posing other questions to himself. "Admitted that there are such little animals. Where did they come from and why did they come to me and not to someone else? Who put them in me? Who is trying to kill me with these microbes?"

Missionaries discourse on a wide range of subjects, assuming too often that their listeners share in their view of the universe. The villagers at Lolo were intensely interested in the fact that Europeans can make so many iron instruments. However, one of their questions which they continually repeated was, "How does the European blacksmith protect himself?" I always answered this in terms of mechanical protection of the body while smelting, pouring, pounding, etc. But my listeners always appeared dissatisfied with these replies. Finally I asked how the local blacksmiths did it, and they revealed that they were speaking in terms of protection against the supernatural power contained in the heated metal. Since I did not share their presupposition about the nature of hot metal, I could never give an intelligible reply. When I replied at last that they retire at 65 so as not to die on the job they were satisfied that the European blacksmith has sense enough to realize he is dealing with supernatural forces which can harm him. However, the fact that the European blacksmith's family practices no taboos again threw the whole subject into confusion for them. I use these illustrations to point out the fact that the missionary carries Western culture with him and communicates it whether he wants to or not. This is so even if the communication of Western thought forms comes across as nonsense and confusion to the native. The missionary who disavows being a carrier of Western culture is denying himself the very structure of his thought into which he cradles his presentation of the gospel and life.

The ordered view of the universe means that faith to believe must be placed in something which is not beneath that order but over and above it. The modern Christian, like the Psalmist, in whose debt he must remain (Oh Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me...Ps. 139), places his faith in a transcendant God. He combines a Hebrew view of God and a Greek view of the universe. The modern man does not sacrifice

the ordered feeling for the universe when he finds faith to believe. He views his faith as finding its locus in the source of order.

The folk man has no need to express his faith in a God which transcends an ordered universe. He rather finds faith to believe based on considerations quite unrelated to the universe. In the folk view God tends to be part of the cosmos and enmeshed in it. Belief in the Christian God (often to the missionary's dismay) does not separate scientific order from metaphysical reality. It is largely because of this fact that folk Christians often tend to equate God with Fate and are at a loss to move against what fate has brought upon them. Among the folk Christians God replaces the former medium for placating and petitioning nature. On one hunt in which I participated I knew the Christians had of their own accord left off the making of medicines in preparation for the hunt. The chief, a non-Christian, also knew this and was very careful to make sure that the Christians petitioned their God before the hunt. These men felt that prayer was automatically needed in place of the medicines.

When the hunt was unsuccessful, none of the Christians felt free to punish their wives for breaking taboos, but they were exceedingly wroth with God, who appeared to have failed them, so they questioned in turn their relation to God and decided that they had not paid their mission pledges as regularly as they should. I attempted to present another alternative to them, but as soon as they saw that I was approaching the hunt failure from a secular point of view (it had rained to the east and the animals were moving that way), they refused to be sympathetic with my reasoning. Their reply: "Sometimes we almost think that God doesn't have a stomach like a man."

## Two Views of Man

A second source of the modern missionary's ethos is his view of man which is historical and abstract. Here again the missionary soon becomes vividly aware that his folk parishoners have a nonhistorical and nonabstracted view of man. We may more properly call the folk man's view as mythological

rather than nonhistorical. His origins are set out for him in terms of myths which he seldom reflects upon until they become nonfunctional in the process of passing them along to his offspring. Parents of another generation do not feel much rewarded in attempting to tell their children local folk tales while the latter have one eye in a mathematics or history book.

In the folk world the historicity of Christianity is felt as unnecessary. It is not part of the local myth and the distinctiveness of Christianity as an historical event is not realized in the local church. This fact reduces the historical Jesus to the kinship son. The importance of Christ lies in the kin relationship of son which shares with the feeling for family, clan and village relationships. Here again the folk man is a kin man. He is built into blood and marriage ties which replace the modern man's feeling for historical ties. Modern man's feeling runs in depth to other generations and other historical epochs, while the folk man is really related in space here and now.

Modern man and therefore the modern missionary speaks and thinks in terms of nations, united nations, one world, space and the universe. Consequently he can if he wishes take a very abstracted view of man. The folk man is seldom if ever conscious of belonging to a world-wide mass of humanity. He is more properly a very well identified member of a certain well-identified family within a known clan or village and his belongingness seldom extends beyond these confines. Consequently man as an abstract is not a popular idea with him. He has little feeling for such an impersonalized human idea.

The results of the abstracting of man from men gives the modern a peculiar position from which to see the good and the bad in man. This is especially true in our tradition in which we separate out the evil nature of man and emphasize certain characteristics such as overeating, over sexual indulgence, as contrary to the ascetic qualities which Christianity has emphasized in both its personalized and abstract view of man. The folk man does not tend to carry out such an abstraction, and consequently there is little place for the ascetic empha-

sis. One of the greatest confusions for missions in modern Africa today is the fact that the missionary living in plenty and comfort stresses in his teaching the ascetic aspects of the Christian life. In a relative way he is practicing some aspects of the modern industrial society's idea of the lightly ascetic life. However, the folk man in Africa is neither interested nor prepared intellectually or emotionally to appreciate what value asceticism might have for the Christian life. The African tends rather to view Christianity (depending upon other conditions) as a means for achieving the fruits of modern living, as a part of the new education.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the modern missionary is culturally prepared to be conscious of contradictions while the folk man tends to embody contradictions without bothering his head about it. Just as has been the case with European Christianity in the 17th and 18th centuries, when kings and princes bounced the populations back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism, the folk masses can contain conflicting ideologies without being aware of the contradictions. The citizens of Heidelberg, Germany, found that they could switch back and forth between the dictates of Rome and Luther apparently without being in the least disturbed ideologically. They simply didn't care. Great portions of folk Christianity do not find it contradictory to give lip service to the tenets of the Christian faith and at the same time adhere to pagan practices and presuppositions. It is exceedingly common for the missionary to recoil emotionally when a trusted convert turns up describing in vivid detail how spirits from the spring chased a man into the forest and nearly killed him.

## Conclusion

The contact of modern missionaries with the folk world introduces the latter to the presuppositions of a modern age. However, these assumptions are such a subtle force within the ethos of the missionary that they seldom come in for discussion. When a missionary learns the language of a tribesman and speaks with him, his point of contact is the language, but often not the thought concealed in the meanings which the words have for the folk man. The missionary's view of the

world is quite ordered. The physical and the metaphysical are rather well separated. The folk man operates upon the assumption that the two are integrally related and interacting. The modern partakes in a recorded history, the folk man in an unrecorded mythological past. It is impossible for a twentieth-century missionary to live a single day in his work-a-day routine without exposing the assumptions upon which his thought forms are based. Whether it be his preaching, teaching, or his silent living, he does so within the framework of ideas which are strange and largely unknown to the folk world. It is because of this that the missionary, no matter how he may endeavor to hide his Western material culture, can never hide his long ontological inheritance.

Footnotes

1. This is the first of three articles which will be dedicated to an examination of the relation of the missionaries' contemporary culture to the folk societies. The fourth in this series will be a summary of the evidence presented, with a suggestion for a re-evaluation of the position that is held by those who deny diffusion of Western culture in their work, as well as those who urge diffusion.

2. See Robert Redfield: The Primitive World and Its Transformation, Cornell University Press, 1956.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Linguistics Across Cultures, by Robert Lado. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957. 141 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by William A. Smalley

One of the axioms with which many linguists approach the problem of teaching or learning a second language (any language other than the one which is one's own mother tongue) is that learning difficulties are predictable on the basis of analysis of differences between the languages. Lado's book is a brief, non-technical exposition of this point of view. It is directed principally to language teachers, but it has its usefulness to missionaries who learn a second language, or who are responsible for guiding the study of others. The last chapter has even more interest for the general reader of Practical Anthropology, who is concerned with the cultural differences between peoples.

After the first chapter ("The Necessity for a Systematic Comparison of Languages and Cultures"), Lado uses the rest of his book for a series of "How to Compare..." chapters, in which he takes up in turn sound systems, grammatical structures, vocabulary systems, writing systems, and cultures.

The chapter on "How to Compare Two Cultures," for example, discusses briefly the form, meaning, and distribution of the Spanish bull fight, and compares it with North American attitudes which result in a very different evaluation of the same event. Lado discusses the factors which cause the Latin American to see in the bull fight a display of bravery, of the triumph of art over brute force, as against those which cause the American to see in it the cruelty of man to a defenseless animal. The differences of point of view lie not in the form of the bull fight, but in the meanings attached to the various elements of it in the two cultures. This and other examples highlight the bases of misunderstandings between peoples of different cultures.

The earlier chapters, in addition to providing the language teacher with important guidance, provide a relatively non-technical introduction to descriptive linguistics, not the least of the values of the book. By this I do not mean to imply that anyone can learn to do descriptive analysis by reading Lado, but that much of the point of view, and many of the basic concepts of linguistics as presently understood in the United States are communicated fairly simply to the reader.

Christianity and African Culture, the proceedings of a conference held at Accra, Gold Coast, May 2-6, 1955, under the auspices of the Christian Council.

Reviewed by Loren Nussbaum

This conference grew out of an address by Professor K. A. Busia to the Gold Coast Christian Council in 1954 in which he said:

> For conversion to the Christian faith to be more than superficial, the Christian Church must come to grips with traditional beliefs and practices, and with the world-view that these beliefs and practices imply...the new convert is poised between two worlds: the old traditions and customs he is striving to leave behind, the new beliefs and practices to which he is still a stranger. The Church would help him better, if she understood the former while she spoke with authority about the latter.

It appears from the seven papers reprinted in this booklet that there was in this conference a serious attempt to come to grips with the problem of the relationship of Christianity and culture (here "African" culture). Four Africans from the Gold Coast and three Europeans presented papers or made comments which are contained in this booklet. The contributions of the Europeans are commendable; those of the Africans are outstanding.

Professor K. A. Busia presented two papers: "The African World View" and "Ancestor Worship, Libation, Stools, Festi-

vals." He spells out the problems involved in the relationship of Christianity and culture. He concludes the first article with these words:

> Can the African be Christian only by giving up his culture, or is there a way by which Christianity can ennoble it? Something, I believe, must die, but only in order that it may bear fruit. To us is entrusted the husbandry.

Mr. J. H. Nketia asks essentially the same question at the conclusion of his able paper on "Birth, Puberty and Death." These African customs do not concern a Christian as an individual, but concern him as a Christian in a web or network of social relations.

Rev. E. A. Asamoa takes the position in his "The Influence of Fetishism" that one can faithfully share the African world view and participate to a considerable extent in the African customs without being a fetish adherent. He also urges a realistic rather than denunciatory approach to the minor deities, spirits, which populate the African's world. He believes in their existence, in a Christian sense.

The outstanding paper is by Rev. C. G. Basta, "The Challenge of African Culture to the Church, and the Message of the Church to African Culture." He favors "baptizing" the pagan culture; "not to prescribe them out of hand but to prune, purify and guide them, making them fit for new and higher service.

There was much discussion of these papers in the conference, but no decisions or recommendations were recorded. Perhaps much more talking and thinking about these matters will have to precede. Or, as suggested in the introduction to the booklet, "even if such issues were open to influence by resolutions made in conference, they have to be worked out in the context of life situations." It is encouraging to see mature Africans seeking to work out these problems in a "real life" way.

Now, briefly, for some of the terms used in this issue: Diffusion refers to the process of transmission or spread of items of culture from one group to another. The ethos of a culture is its own distinctive point of view, its attitudes and emotional reactions, its philosophy, whether formulated or not. Folk societies are groups which are not "primitive" but which have been only partially touched by any great civilization. Examples are the rural areas of China, Japan and Latin America. Symbiosis refers to a relationship between groups, such that they are mutually dependent on one another. Perhaps one group hunts and the other farms, and they trade their surplus goods.